(d) to (e) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has notified the Plastic, Manufacture and Usage Rules, 1999 amended 2000 and 2003 banning the manufacture, stocking, distribution and selling of carry bags made of virgin/recycle plastic which are below 18 to 12 inches in size and 20 microns in thickness. Some hill stations have also notified stricter norms to control use and disposal of non bio-degradable garbage in private and public places. The concerned local authorities from time to time undertake mass awareness campaign including involving local voluntary groups exhorting tourists to dispose solid waste in designated places/dustbins.

Objectives of WCCB

1888. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA; Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been notified;

(b) if so, the objectives of the Bureau; and

(c) how effectively the WCCB contains poaching in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S.REGUPATHY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Central Government *vide* notification dated 6th June, 2007 has set up the 'Wildlife Crime Control Bureau'. The Bureau is headed by the Director, Wildlife Preservation with headquarters at New Delhi. It has four Regional Offices *i.e.* New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata and three Sub-Regional Offices at Amritsar, Guwahati and Cochin. In addition one new Regional Office at Jabalapur has been created.

The objectives of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau is to control wildlife crime in the country. It involves collecting and collating intelligence related to organized wildlife crime activities, disseminating the same to State and other enforcement agencies for immediate action so as to apprehend the criminals and to establish a Centralized Wildlife Crime Data Bank alongwith coordination of actions of various offices, State governments and other authorities.

Destruction of mangroves

1889. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that large scale destruction of mangroves is taking place in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have contemplated any comprehensive strategy to protect the mangroves;

(d) whether Government have received proposal from the State of Kerala regarding conservation of mangrove eco-system in the State;

(e) if so, details thereof;

(f) whether necessary sanction has been given to the proposal;

(g) if so, details thereof alongwith the funds sanctioned by the Centre; and

(h) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) As per the State of Forest Report 2003, published by Forest Survey of India (FSI), the mangrove cover which was 4482 ha in 2001, has reduced to 4461 ha in 2003, which is 21 km^2 of the total mangrove area and according to FSI this net decrease is not loss of mangrove cover but is an interpretational correction.

(c) Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 1991 has been issued by Government for the purpose of protecting the coastal areas which *inter-alia* also aims at conservation of mangroves. The said notification prohibits developmental activities in the mangrove areas other than those essential activities specified in the same notification. Besides, the Ministry also has a Scheme on Conservation and Management of mangroves.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The proposal envisages preparation of management action plan for conservation and management of mangroves at Kannur and Vimbanad in Kerala.

(f) Yes, Sir.

(g) For the above projects a sum of Rs. 100.46 lakhs has been sanctioned in the financial year 2006-2007.

(h) Does not arise.

Draft of SAARC Convention

1890. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during 14th SAARC Summit held in Delhi on 3rd and 4th of April, 2007, the New Delhi declaration had a clause noting India's initiatives to prepare a draft of a SAARC Convention on Mutual Assistance aiming at further facilitation of extradition of criminals;

(b) if so, whether that draft has been prepared; and

(c) whether its adoption awaits the next SAARC Summit or it would be done through circulation or by any other extant practice or procedure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Sri Lanka will be hosting a Meeting of Legal Advisers to examine the proposal for a draft Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters in September, 2007.